

# Christianity and Crisis

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## A Glimmer of Hope for the Arab Refugees

THERE seems at long last a chance that these unfortunates may have something done for them. It will not be what most of them wish—they want to be repatriated, and that seems far too perilous. It will not fulfill promises made to them by the United Nations, who said they would get back their property or receive compensation, and the State of Israel apparently has no intention of trying to compensate them. But there is hope for immediate relief for these pitiable folk.

The U.N. Economic Survey Mission has presented a thorough and very intelligent report. Its able chairman, Gordon Clapp, is to be congratulated on his wisdom in steering clear of thorny political questions, so far as possible, and focussing on economic necessities. To be sure one reads between the lines and sees the crippling limitations on economic advances caused by the establishment of a separate Jewish State and the consequent fragmentation of a small land. But the Mission addressed itself to its task within the political limits.

It asked and the U.N. Assembly voted a sum of \$54,000,000 for a program of building, reforestation, irrigation, etc., within the next eighteen months. This will supply the most urgent need—work. Unemployment and consequent hopeless poverty is breaking the spirits of the half million refugees and the four hundred thousand more poverty-stricken landless peasants who apparently are sharing their miserable camps. This sum of money is asked of

the nations, especially of the four Powers who were represented on the Mission, and every effort should be made to get Congress to appropriate its quota at once.

The Report asks the cooperation of the Arab Powers, and sets up "pilot projects" which are within their capacities. It would be a mistake to leave them out. This is their regional responsibility, and these suggested projects will increase their resources and raise their standard of living. If Mr. Truman's Point Four can be carried out, we may contribute engineering skill and experience, but the Arab Powers—and they have engineers of their own—can carry the load. To be sure Zionist propagandists have talked of a grandiose T.V.A. for the Middle East in the Jordan Valley; but they have omitted to say that Israel owns but a small fraction of the territory involved, and under present circumstances it is inconceivable that other States will place their watersheds at her disposal. The "pilot projects" named in the Report avoid political complications.

Here at last is something practicable, and something which offers immediate assistance to these hundreds of thousands of victims of a strife for which they had no responsibility. We owe a debt to this Mission for the pains it has taken and the patent wisdom of its proposals. We have a plain obligation to see that Congress does its part for us in providing our share of the money asked for.

H. S. C.

# The Christian Attitude Toward Capitalism and Socialism

CLARIS EDWIN SILCOX

THE necessary opposition of Christian teaching to communism is reasonably obvious. On the other hand, there are aspects of capitalism which seem to be hardly compatible with Christianity. Are we, then, to accept the faith of those who insist that a true Christian must be a socialist?

Of course, in the last century, there have been influential movements known as Christian socialism, and even some attempts, despite the repeated warnings against socialism in a sequence of papal encyclicals, to harmonize Roman Catholicism and socialism. But while Christianity in its varied forms has a profound social and economic significance, it must not be identified with socialism. The main difference is to be found in the view of human nature which, according to Christian thought, needs to be redeemed from selfishness and sin but, according to most socialist programs, would seem to be inherently inclined to virtue. Or, to put it differently: if all men were truly Christian, socialism would hardly be needed, but since they are not—far from it—socialism will not work.

At all events, from a Christian point of view, there is nothing morally wrong about capital itself, however it may be owned or controlled. Capital is absolutely necessary to the creation of new wealth, and to the Christian there can be little but praise for the thrift which is essential to the creation of such new capital—provided it is not overdone!

Indeed, there is at least one parable in the Gospel which, indirectly if not directly, seems to put the mark of approbation on such efforts. It is the story of the householder who, when going away into a far country, gave to one of his servants five pounds, to another two pounds, and to a third one pound. On his return, he called the three before him and asked what they had done with the money. The householder spoke in high praise of the man who had invested his five pounds and made another five; also of him who had invested his two and made another two; but he was bitter toward the third who had put his single pound in a napkin and failed to invest it in the economic life of the world.

*Wealth does or may breed wealth, and money does or may breed money.* The farmer who does not sell or eat up all his crop of potatoes, but who holds some back for the next planting is entitled, other things being equal, to enjoy a yield of twenty, fifty

or a hundred fold. In agriculture, this is obviously a *law of nature*. To be sure, risks are involved, and the man who sows may lose all he has planted, if the weather or the soil prove unfavorable, or if he disobeys the elementary rule of good farming. One cannot eliminate risk entirely—full social security is an illusion! A sound economy will, however, seek to reduce the element of risk to the minimum, but it will never abrogate the old maxim: "nothing ventured, nothing gained."

Nor is there anything basically unchristian in the use of such capital to obtain a reasonable profit for oneself. Indeed, much of the current talk about "production for use and not for profit" is idle chatter. Such nonsense implies that one can never produce *both* for *public* use and for *private* profit; and if some one profits, others must lose. But no sane capitalist would ever invest any of his money in producing something never intended for use. His hope for private profit depends upon his faith that his product will be used as largely as possible. For that reason, he spends huge sums in advertising. The greater the use, the larger the profit.

The man who does produce a "better mouse-trap" may destroy the capital already invested in inferior mouse-traps and he may make a fortune for himself. But in doing this, he is not only creating gainful employment for others, but he is also producing something which may be of great benefit to everybody. Only mice, not men, may legitimately complain of his success! With the accumulation of real wealth, not only do the individuals who produce and market it enjoy a profit, but the entire society may reap great gains. The accumulation of true wealth is seldom unilateral; in a real sense, it is multilateral.

Therefore, it may be said that whatever fallacy or iniquity there may be in capitalism, it is not in the concept of capital as the seed of new wealth, nor even in its tendency to seek and secure profit. One can never be assured of a steady flow of capital if the capitalist is not given a reasonable chance to profit, especially when he is never offered any significant protection against loss. Profit, to be sure, is not the sole objective of business. It cannot be. And profits may be excessive, especially when effected through monopolies not only tolerated, but actually granted, by society. But profits are both justifiable as an incentive and necessary. No busi-

ness can long survive with its annual balance-sheet consistently in the red.

It may, however, be argued that the real sin in capitalism is in the fact that too much capital is privately owned and controlled; and since the means of production today are so vast and expensive, only huge corporations, in which individual shareholders have little voice, if any, can provide them; and that these corporations, by reason of their great size almost inevitably drift into monopoly. Therefore, it is argued, they should be taken over by the government, owned and operated directly by society as a whole, not for profit but in the public interest alone—whatever that is and however it may be discovered! Some would compensate the owners of the expropriated business; others, as in certain countries today, would just liquidate the owners and turn the properties over to the blessed proletariat and their genial dictators! This seems to be the nub of the socialist attack on capitalism.

To deal with this specific attack from the Christian angle, one must then consider the question of private property, its rights (if any) and its responsibilities; and beyond that, the possibility of better management and greater public-mindedness when an industry or business is directed by some level of government. Could the critics prove that (1) there is no justification for private property at all, and (2) that governments are more apt to serve the public well-being than private interests, the socialist case might be established. Then, from the point of view of Christian ethics, one would only need to embroider such arguments with beautiful generalizations about "All wealth comes from God and should be used for the well-being of all men," or "we are our brothers' keepers." But can the socialist case be thus established, unredeemed human nature being what it is?

What about the right to private property? Among a good many primitive people, all property seems to belong to the community, although individuals may have some personal and movable belongings such as metal decorations, etc. But the significant fact is that such community ownership seems to be nearly always the mark of a *primitive* culture, and that as man establishes his power over nature, as he develops a true civilization and ceases a rather futile, nomadic form of life, there arises the concept of private property, and with it, the law of the community: "thou shalt not steal" and "thou shalt not covet . . . anything that is thy neighbor's." If there be such a thing as human progress, then the recognition of the right to private property seems to be involved in such progress.

These matters were discussed before the Christian era, and the great Aristotle was obviously distrustful of "government upon a community of Goods" believing that the experience of society was against it. He did not deny that in a civilized community,

properties "in some respects, ought to be common," but he added that they should be "upon the whole, private." Later, the early Church fathers, more or less obsessed over original sin and Paradise Lost, and not troubled by Darwinian or similar theories, seemed very confused, affirming that "before the fall" property was common, but that it became private with the birth of man's disobedience and selfishness. All of which, of course, brings us back to our theory of unredeemed human nature.

St. Augustine probed more deeply, although his reasoning was sometimes colored by events in which he can hardly be acquitted of disinterestedness since he sought to justify the government's seizure of the property of an heretical sect, the Donatists. On that occasion, he held that "private property is the creation of the State and exists only in virtue of the protection of the State"; and further, "that the right to private property is limited by the use to which it is put; a man who does not use his property rightly, has no real or valid claim to it." Some centuries later, Thomas Aquinas distinguished between the right to private property so far as its control and management were involved (this, he asserted) and, on the other hand, to its "absolute use" which he denied.

There is a very great subtlety in these views, although sometimes it looks as a difference without a distinction. But it is certainly difficult to see how any individual could successfully and permanently retain his hold on a specific piece of property if the society of his day did not use its coercive power to protect him in its possession, control, management *and use*. Indeed, our own theory of eminent domain implies that if the State, which has provided such an individual with such a right to possession, feels that it can put the property in question to better use, it is justified in taking it away from him, usually after suitable compensation. However, one thing needs to be kept clearly in mind; sometime and somehow, the organization of society came to believe that, the motives of men being what they were, property tended to be more productive and everybody to be more secure when owned privately than under communal control, and consequently it developed laws protecting the private owner.

Is there, then, a specifically Christian answer to this problem? One doubts it. It all depends. The Christian church can defend neither the thesis of the socialists nor that of the free enterprisers. The Christian solution, if there be one, is not to be found in the title-deeds to any piece of property, but in the ultimate motives of those who "own," control or manage it. Do they act as stewards of God's gifts to them or not? Were private enterprisers fully possessed by the Christian outlook on God and man, it might be better to leave the enterprise in their hands (as many papal encyclicals would leave it in the hands of the "corporations") since it may be assumed



that they understand its possibilities and limitations better than others, and that what is everybody's business tends to be nobody's business.

But if such owners or administrators are obsessed by the desire to "take all the traffic will stand," if they indulge in willful misrepresentation of the goods they supply, if in their lust for economic power and "empire" they trample on human rights, and with shocking immodesty assume dictatorial control in areas in which they have little or no competence, if they misuse the privileges and practical monopolies given them by society, if they and even their organized employees assume the attitude of the "public be damned—we are going to get whatever we can," then it may be necessary to deprive them of all responsibility and ownership in the matter. Society gave; society can take away; blessed be the overlordship of society!

But, human nature being what it is, and democracy, as we know it, being so clumsy, such a transfer of ownership to the community as a whole, or even the more rigid controls exerted by the State, may solve nothing. Indeed, it may only invite new dangers such as many socialist countries are now facing. If the agents appointed by the government to operate these enterprises, instead of conducting the busi-

ness on sound principles for the "greater glory of God" and man, yield to pressure groups within or without the industry seeking to force uneconomic practices upon them, or if they depend upon the State's powers of taxation to cover up their own errors, extravagances and corruption, or they develop, perhaps under coercion, the bureaucrat's addiction to a solution, by convenient but utterly inadequate standards of administration, of problems basically psychological and infinitely varied, the result will only be confusion worse confounded, and no ranting about democracy will preserve the threatened moral values. Democracy is not the last and final word—human nature being what it is.

Much would depend upon the vitality of the Christian sentiment which permeated the new administrators, for Christianity has to do primarily with persons, not with systems. Ultimately, it deals with values which do not ignore political, economic or financial issues, but which transcend them. The true Christian is both IN the world, and not OF it. The church hears a voice coming down through the centuries: "Who hath appointed me judge or divider over you?" The Christian business man and his employee too, if truly religious, hears the warning: "Beware of covetousness!"

## Attack Upon Religion

A. ROY ECKARDT

ONE need not be a disciple of Karl Marx, to be in agreement with his statement: "A critique of religion is the beginning of all criticism." The function of Christian thought is to criticize—to criticize everything that is human in the light of everything that is really divine. And a basic point at which to initiate a critique of the human is with religion; for religion is one of the biggest sources of man's troubles. It is not *the* biggest source—man is his own greatest difficulty—but a very great source nonetheless. A critique of religion is the beginning of all criticism because religion is the place where human tragedy and conflict come to their sharpest focus.

Some people today feel assured that our world is headed for destruction. Let us consider a more modest proposition. *If* our world is headed for destruction, religion is and will be a major cause of such a state of affairs. As the term is used here, religion means the assumption of, and commitment to, a being or principle held worthy of devotion.

### II

Let us look into the question of why our deities cause so much trouble and tragedy and why, therefore, they should be attacked. One reason we cannot approve of mankind's various religions is that

there are so many of them that it is confusing, and we do not like being confused. There is abroad in our world a whole bevy of gods and it is terribly hard for anyone to decide which he should follow. Some people choose to devote themselves to their nation or race while others give themselves in obedience to an economic or social class. Some men seek solace in the laboratory while others find refuge in a political system. And of course if none of such faiths seem too attractive at the moment, a man always has himself to worship, or some part of himself like sex.

But the whole picture is quite bewildering. One god many of us have found particularly tantalizing is Reason, whose followers bid us join the cult of objectivity. Their creed is, "Be objective and thou shalt inherit eternal life." Reason has his competitors, however. Aphrodite, goddess of love and passion, is not dead. Even in this age of science she calls to us, "Come unto me and I will give you rest. I will be music unto your ears and beauty unto your eyes and peace unto your soul." The spiritual and emotional barrenness of a world given to technology bolsters Aphrodite's cause. Thus the temptation comes to join the cult of subjectivity, to substitute a religion of feeling and will for a religion of the intellect. But on what basis are we going to

make our choice? Those who assume that the one way to reach Truth is to be objective have forgotten that their assumption is a subjective one, and that they themselves are never really objective when their own reputation and interest are at stake. Yet if we ignore them and go in the other direction we soon see that subjectivity, when it is not chastened by objective consultation with one's fellows, very easily becomes arbitrariness. However unsatisfactory a god Reason may be, we must not contend that the flaunting of reason is prerequisite to salvation.

### III

Another thing perplexing about religion, something that makes man's deities seem rather like devils, is the fact that our gods are very exclusive, and thereby they further injustice. Arnold Nash recently told a group of how the son of an African chieftain who was studying abroad once asked him whether it was true that two out of three doctors actually endorsed a certain product. Dr. Nash tried his best to explain. (I am quoting from memory.)

"Well, no, it's not *literally* true. That's just advertising. That's what you have to expect in this country."

"You mean the manufacturers tell untruths?"

"I don't know that you could put it that way. The people here believe that business is business. They would tell you that somehow or other a man has to sell his product."

The young man thought for a moment, remembering how he had recently been told by a sculptress that she believed in art for art's sake. "I'm beginning to understand the religion of you white men," was his slow and startling comment. "Business is business. Art for art's sake. It's the same as in my tribe where the rain god has exclusive care of the rain and no one else dares to interfere with him." The young African had been officially introduced to the polytheism of Western culture.

Not long ago an official of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company defended the policy of racial segregation in his company's New York City housing projects by affirming that no social issue was involved and that it was merely a matter of business and economics. Look out for the rain god! Or is it the god known to us as Mammon?

In a recent article a professor of psychiatry was quoted as saying that the best way to make one's marriage last is to accept conventional patterns of life. The happily married couple is one that submits to group standards, since that is the best way to adjust to society. One of our newfangled exclusive gods is Adjustment. There is a principle worthy of our devotion! What could be more vital than getting oneself adjusted? Whether group standards are worth adjusting to is something that could never occur to the devotee of this god, and the mere suggestion that injustice and the status quo are frequent

bedfellows appears as blasphemous. The suggestion could come only from a Communist.

Our gods are almost always exclusive gods and an exclusive deity is invariably a threat to universal justice.

### IV

Not only are we bewildered in the presence of a great host of competing gods, and not only are man's gods so often ethically questionable, but they are also always battling with one another. What happens when the religious loyalties of one group of men conflict with the religious loyalties of other men? There is bound to be a struggle, and the outcome is often bloodshed and suffering. In our contemporary scene the most aggressive world religion is communism, although probably secularism runs it a close second. Communism, as *The Christian Century* once summarized it, "has its sacred scriptures, its inspired revelators, its inerrant dogma, its saints, its martyrs, its hagiology, its demonology, its heresy trials, its inquisition, its excommunications, its pope, its ruling hierarchy, its initiatory vows, its consecrated priesthood, its missionaries, its sacred shrines, its proselyting passion, its apocalyptic future to make up for a grim present." But there are other religions and other gods readily available. The story is told of how L. P. Jacks, when he returned to England one time from a visit to America, was asked his opinion of American democracy. "I didn't investigate it," he replied, "I don't like to disturb people at their devotional exercises."

Listen to these words: "Every German must rededicate himself to the principles of Germanism and pledge himself to fight this Jewish monster and its propaganda wherever it rears its head. Our government must be purged of traitors. Our schools must be purged of those professors who have only scorn for our German institutions and praise for the Jewish international. German youth must be educated in the German way of life, dedicated to German ideals and all foreignisms must be purged from our public life; there is no room for them here." The Nazi god of blood and soil was defeated not long ago but he has his counterpart in America today. For the words just quoted were uttered on August 18, 1949, by the head of a benevolent and protective order meeting in Appleton, Wisconsin—except that I have substituted the word "German" where he used "American" and "Jewish" where he used "Communist." The speaker also referred to his own order as the "greatest organization on earth."

We in America have our gods all right, and many of them have their sleeves rolled up. It is always well to have a god (as well as a devil to serve as a scapegoat) because if you can once cloak your designs with expressions of divine favor, then, when you set out to show your strength against your fellows, you can never be legitimately accused of doing

wrong. You are simply being faithful to your god. You are not sinful; you are merely sacrificial. Soviet Russia has tortured and annihilated untold numbers of people and said, in effect, "Why these were hopeless heretics. They offended against the Most High, and in the name of Economic Determinism and Its only begotten Son, Josef Stalin, these depraved ones had to perish." We Americans can in good conscience prepare for our part in the slaughter because after all we are not thinking of our interests. It is the "American way of life" we are concerned about. It must be preserved at all costs, for it is truly divine, and any sacrifice we can perform in its honor is less than our real duty.

I personally feel that this particular god of ours is somewhat more respectable than one or another of the Russian deities, but I wonder sometimes whether this is simply because I am an American. In any event, man's gods are always getting into fights, and we cannot really approve of that, any more than we can approve of either the confusion they cause or their exclusiveness. How often one hears, "Now if only more people were religious, maybe there would be more harmony in the human family." We may wish to laugh at that for the greatest crimes in the history of mankind are always committed in the name of some kind of religion.

## V

Where does Christian faith fit into the attack upon religion? Religion is of course inescapable and all-pervasive. No man can live without something to give his life meaning. To be or not to be religious; that is definitely not the question. The only question is whether you and I are going to have an uncritical faith or one which serves as a critique of all our religious loyalties. In the Letter to the Romans the apostle Paul describes man as one who worships and serves "the creature rather than the Creator" (1:25). Man, in his present state, is fundamentally an idol worshipper. We set up deities of our own choosing and bow down and adore them, fancying that they are God Himself. We subscribe to particular truths and make them synonymous with universal Truth. We give our allegiance to particular beings and equate them with universal Being. We kneel in devotion before finite powers and principles and imagine they can give us infinite security. We employ our gods as excuses for exerting will-to-power over other men.

But then the Christian revelation appears, to remind us, as Reinhold Niebuhr puts it, that "religion is not simply, as is generally supposed, an inherently virtuous human quest for God. It is merely a final battleground between God and man's self-esteem." The Christian revelation comes to us in the name of One who is not an idol, but the deadly foe of idols, the God of Jesus Christ, the only One who is justified in destroying other gods because He is the

beginning and the end of all existence. The Christian revelation is, among other things, an attack upon religion, upon man's perennial attempt, by means of idolatry, to escape from the real God—who is not a god or a being or a principle but the infinite Source of all things and therefore the Judge of all gods and all beings and all principles. The Christian revelation is a Word from the Creator of the universe, who is also universal Truth and Justice, and who calls upon men to give up their worship of the creature, to cease their servitude to partial truths, and to surrender their allegiance to unjust gods. The God who is the end of man's religious confusion, whose righteous anger is aroused in the face of exclusiveness and injustice, and who embodies that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, is the only real God and is alone worthy of our devotion. In other words and paradoxically, the Christian revelation means the end of religion.

## The National Study Conference on Church and Economic Life

The second conference on the church and economic life, called by the Federal Council Commission on economic life was held in Detroit Feb. 16th to 19th. It was attended by 450 delegates, representing various denominational and interdenominational commissions, dealing with social and economic affairs. The conference was undoubtedly the most representative gathering of its kind ever held in this country, and possibly in any country. Some of the most influential business and labor leaders of the country were in attendance as well as leaders of cooperatives and farm organizations and professional and clerical leaders.

A surprising degree of common conviction on economic problems was achieved in the work of four different commissions, despite the breadth of economic interest represented. The spirit of the conference is well expressed in a "Call to Action in Relation to Economic Life" which was passed by the conference. The call asserts: "Christians must demonstrate that God rules and that men of differing views can be one in the determination to discover his will. Strong men charged with the direction of industry and strong men charged with leadership in labor and agriculture are obligated to bring dedicated minds to difficult problems and in the mutual sharing of experience to reach conclusions designed to create a more brotherly world."

The statement on "Freedom of Enterprise and Economic Controls" declared: "We cannot talk realistically in terms of restoring an unregulated competitive price system in America. We know that certain social controls are necessary but we must scrutinize and judge every proposal for greater control from the standpoint of whether it serves one value, such as justice or order to the denial of other important values such as freedom. . . . But we would add that basic values in justice cannot be achieved unless proper decisions and institutional arrangements are made in three areas: 1) economic stabilization; 2) income distribution; and 3) monopoly control."



The statement on "The American Economy in an Interdependent Economic World" asserted: "We believe that war is not inevitable and that the American people, as the greatest producers and consumers of the world's goods, have three basic economic responsibilities: 1) to use their economic strength in such a way as to contribute to a just and durable peace; 2) to assist other nations to attain basic self-support and a decent standard of living; and 3) to safeguard and promote economic health in the United States." On the relation of our own economic health to that of the world, the statement declared: "Economic readjustments and business recessions in America have serious consequences in other countries and are felt throughout the world."

The conference also called for a re-examination of policies which lead to food surpluses and requested the Federal Council to call a special meeting of experts to deal with the moral and economic danger of allowing food to spoil while many at home and abroad are poorly fed.

The conference affirmed the continuing responsibility of America in helping Europe solve its economic problems, but did not presume to test the adequacy of various proposals for achieving currency convertability or the integration of Europe. Nor did it pass on the various proposals for closing the dollar gap, though it emphasized that only such proposals should be considered which would achieve reciprocity of trade on a "high level of transactions."—R. N.

## The World Church: News and Notes

### Who Are the Volksdeutsche?

JAMES A. RYBERG

*Mr. Ryberg is a young American Lutheran from Minnesota who has recently been appointed to the Information Section of the Department of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, World Council of Churches at Geneva.*

Much has been written about and done for displaced persons in Europe this past year. As innocent victims of World War II, they have deserved every bit of attention and aid they have received, as small compensation for the suffering and distress they have known in a decade without peace or freedom.

According to latest statistics, some 1,400,000 displaced persons were helped in 1949 by the International Refugee Organization, an agency of the United Nations which is commissioned to resettle as many DP's as possible in new countries. In this tremendous task, the I.R.O. has had the aid of Church World Service, U.S.A., the Lutheran World Federation and other church groups and voluntary agencies who have been challenged to help DP's become "New Neighbors" in America, Australia and elsewhere.

But few people realize that the 1,400,000 displaced persons helped last year through the International Refugee Organization actually involves only about ten per cent of all of the refugees who were jammed into Western Europe—primarily West Germany—during 1949. The real story of refugees involves more than twelve million "Volksdeutsche" and other German refugees—a number expanding daily as thousands more escape from the Eastern occupational zones. These people have been declared ineligible for I.R.O. aid.

Both DP's and the "Volksdeutsche" are classed as refugees. To the unpracticed eye, there appears little difference between the two groups. At first glance, even their camps look alike. Yet, the difference between DP camps and "Durchgangslagern" for "Volksdeutsche" refugees is not in outward appearance, but rather in the mental attitudes and outlook on life of the persons who are forced to live in them. DP's, through help given them to go to other countries to start life afresh,

have increasingly been given new hope. Yet, for "Volksdeutsche," the situation is exactly reversed, and hope once strong, now diminishes more each day. Physical aid, in the form of food and clothing, which once encouraged them—which once brightened their eyes and warmed their hearts with the knowledge that they still had friends unknown—now only reminds them anew of their pitiable plight.

### Hitler Called Them "Germans"

Part of 12 million refugees who are classed as "Volksdeutsche" include people who formerly lived in countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. They had formerly been stalwart, hard-working, God-fearing citizens of those countries. Born there, as their fathers before them, they were destined to suffer for the "super-race" theory of Adolf Hitler. Because their ancestors had German "blood" in their veins, the Nazi leader gave them a new name: "Volksdeutsche." He called them "Germans," although they were no more genuinely German than second or third generation Americans whose forefathers had migrated from Germany.

Unlike the "Reichdeutsche," real German nationals who formerly lived in the part of Germany now occupied by Russian troops—East Prussia and Silesia, the "Volksdeutsche," for the most part, never were Nazi sympathizers. Yet, because of the nomenclature given to them by "Der Fuhrer," a name which they did not and do not claim, they must suffer today by harsh definition, classed as "former enemies."

After the end of the war and the drawing up of the Potsdam Agreement in 1945, hundreds of thousands, millions of "Volksdeutsche" (or "ethnic Germans," as they are now called) clogged the roads leading out of Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia into Germany. They were expelled in a rash of revenge by the people of those countries, driven "back" into Germany. Thus, in effect, the Potsdam Agreement became a trap-door which dropped twelve millions of "Volksdeutsche" and other German refugees out of the level of normal life into the subterranean existence of refugees.

The "Volksdeutsche" are now drifting about Western

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Germany and the western zones of Austria. Their first and quite natural desire is to "go home" to the countries which once held them as citizens. They do not want to stay in Germany or Austria—where they are neither wanted or needed—rather, they want to return to the homes from which they were uprooted in 1945. Such, of course, is not possible, both for political and international reasons.

### *A Millstone on Recovery*

Today, as for the past five long years, "Volks-deutsche" refugees continue to live in shabby, inadequate camps, in overcrowded drafty barracks, in cold garrets, in patched and mended tents, in damp caves, any place which offers some sort of shelter. "Volks-deutsche" refugees find little work in Germany or Austria, because first preference for jobs goes to German and Austrian citizens. They have endured five painful years with ever ebbing hope, with the result that they have now begun to feel that they are people without any rights as human beings! They are dependent for food and shelter primarily upon the German and Austrian governments. The weight of the 12 million-plus refugees hangs like a millstone around the necks of German and Austrian economic recovery.

Today, visitors to refugee camps sheltering "Volks-deutsche" notice that persons living there have almost forgotten how to smile. The embers of hope are slowly fading in their hearts. Out of sheer desperation, they feel the only thing that can help them is another war! Such frustration is permanently damaging to a valuable segment of humanity, who, though they fear Communism, have found little to cling to in the democracy offered to them thus far by their "conquerors."

### *Call to Nations*

At a conference held recently at Salzburg, Austria, the World Council of Churches asked the nations of the world to consider together providing international aid for the 12 millions of refugees—either by aiding them financially to build homes, farms and shops inside of Germany and Austria, or to transport them to other countries which will have use for their desperately willing hearts and once-skilled hands.

Refugees are tired of charity. They are weary of privation and feeble of hope. They want but one thing: a chance to live, to work, to have rights once again as citizens. The Christians of the world community can help them to gain that goal by urging, in every way possible, that international help be given to all refugees, and in finding means to accomplish that end.

The urgency of the German refugee problem is vital to the future of world peace. As a large and untended wound in the body of society, it must be healed or removed, else it will fester and poison all of civilization. —*Ecumenical Press Service, Geneva.*

### **Nikolai Gives Statistics On Russian Church**

The Russian Orthodox Church at present comprises 20,000 religious communities administered by 70 bishops, according to Metropolitan Nikolai, deputy to Patriarch Alexei of Moscow, speaking in Prague.

He said the number of bishops is "over 75" and added that there are more than 90 monasteries scattered throughout Russia.

(Figures published by the official Calendar of the Moscow Patriarchate for the year 1947 gave the number of bishops as 66, comprising six metropolitans, 24 archbishops and 36 bishops.)—*Religious News Service*

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